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INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
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UNCLAS KHARTOUM 001771

DEPT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, SE WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG, AF/C
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PROP](#) [MCAP](#) [ASEC](#) [KPKO](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: NEW JEM VIDEOS INTENDED TO DOCUMENT ITS STRENGTH AFTER
OMDURMAN ATTACK AND THREATEN NEW ACTION

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) recently released three videos documenting a parade of several hundred armed men riding in more than 80 military vehicles. Although the date of the footage cannot be authoritatively determined, the speeches and audio on the tape reference the first JEM attack on Omdurman and the ICC indictment against Bashir, indicating that the films were shot after the May 10 attack and the July 14 request for an ICC indictment against President Bashir. In addition to displaying JEM's renewed strength following the Omdurman attack, there are multiple references throughout the videos to future attacks on Khartoum, the need for regime change, and JEM's alleged superiority to other rebel movements. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) Within the last two weeks, JEM's website (www.sudanjem.com) published links to three of its new videos posted on Google video. (Note: In August 2008, Sudan temporarily blocked access to the popular video sharing site youtube.com. On November 30, a selection of the videos also was posted on YouTube by one user. According to this YouTube member, the videos were filmed in late July, 2008. On December 11, JEM's website was not operational. End Note.) The three videos are entitled "Long Arm," a reference to JEM's code name for the May 10 attack on Omdurman.

¶3. (U) The video begins with a hyper-dramatized overture (oddly reminiscent of the music from the Matrix movie) and a series of special effects. The title "Justice and Equality Movement - Long Arm 2008" then appears on the screen first in English and then in Arabic. The video then cuts to a mixture of footage of JEM leaders and military equipment.

"THIS IS HOW WE ATTACKED THEM"

¶4. (U) The video focuses primarily on a military parade with approximately twenty men marching in unison in the desert. This is followed by footage of JEM vehicles driving through an urban area (ostensibly the outskirts of Omdurman in May 2008) with a crowd spontaneously cheering them on with screams of "God is Great" ("Allahu Akbar"). The video then returns to the parade in the desert, and shows a sequence of six different JEM units, each with 10-20 vehicles. Most of the vehicles appear to be modified Land Cruiser "technicals," one-quarter of which are mounted with anti-aircraft or heavy machine guns. The announcer (amplified by a public address system) declares that "the groups that are before you are a quick reaction force that will attack the cities. They are an example of the soldiers that entered Omdurman. As you see them, this is how we attacked." (Note: The announcer's words do not appear to be a later dubbing, as his microphone picks up the peripheral sounds of honking, screaming men, etc. End Note). The announcer then praises the fighters saying "You are our heroes - you have become accustomed to these difficult circumstances."

NUMBERS OF MEN AND VEHICLES USED IN ATTACK

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15. (U) Following the announcer's initial remarks, a military commander presents himself to JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim and provides a summary of the number of men and vehicles used in the three fronts of the JEM attack on Omdurman. (Note: The commander does not use a microphone and the audio is not clear. The commander initially appears to say that JEM employed over 500 vehicles in the attack, but then lists the three fronts as having 50, 202, and 44 vehicles. End Note).

PRAISING JEM'S "HEROES" AND FOCUS ON WEAPONRY

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16. (U) Following the commander's presentation, the announcer then returns to the parade. As the camera slowly pans across the "second unit" of fighters, the announcer comments, "These are the heroes that entered Khartoum in the daylight. These are the people that have written history in the famous fight in Omdurman. They are ready to change the government. They have fought for seven years in the fight. They showed to the world that there is no government." The announcer then comments on the fighters' weaponry including: SPG-9 (a Russian tripod-mounted man-portable, 73 millimetre calibre recoilless anti-aircraft gun,) a "doyshka," "garnov" and other weapons. Pointing to one anti-aircraft gun, the announcer comments "this is what downed the government's airplane."

"THIS IS ONLY A SMALL EXAMPLE OF OUR FORCE"

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17. (U) For approximately the next 20 minutes, the other two videos provide ongoing footage of four additional military units. The announcer repeatedly states before the arrival of each unit, "This is only a select example of each unit and does not represent the whole unit." The announcer leads the units in cheers, saying that each unit has its own intelligence, air defense, and

transportation divisions. At one point the announcer comments, "these men will help deliver Bashir to the International Criminal Court." Later in the film, the announcer then nonchalantly comments, "We will enter Khartoum a second time. Where are you, Bashir?"

MOCKING OTHER MOVEMENTS AND PROMISING TO RETURN TO KHARTOUM

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18. (U) The announcer then chastises other rebel movements (and perhaps the SPLM) by questioning, "Where are the other movements that claim they are fighting for the marginalized of Sudan? Where are they?" He then adds, "JEM is the only group that has a presence in the field. JEM is also the only group that has a real political program." The announcer also leads the soldiers in rhyming cheers in Arabic throughout the movies including "Go forth, go forth - Khalil. We are your troops for change!" or "All our force, [will be] inside Khartoum!"

ASSEMBLY OF FORCE AND FOCUS ON ETHNIC DIVERSITY OF JEM

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19. (U) At the conclusion of the parade the camera pans across the field of vehicles appearing to be more than 80 in number with several hundred men. Khalil Ibrahim, escorted by bodyguards, then walks in front of his men and a separate group of women. Ibrahim returns to his shaded VIP area and one commander delivers a speech focusing on the ethnic and geographic diversity within JEM (in order to dispel the view that much of JEM's strength is Zaghawa-based). "These fighters represent all of Sudan: The Nuba Mountains, the Hadra region, Abyei, the North, and from all three Darfur states," says the commander. Continuing, he names over twenty tribes that have members in JEM. Another commander follows by addressing addressing Ibrahim: "We do not come from a single tribe. Your troops are disciplined, organized, and cultured. They are engineers, lawyers, and the elite." The video ends with another mixture of footage from Omdurman and its residents greeting JEM, images of JEM leadership, and the final credits attributed to "A JEM media presentation."

OTHER VIDEOS

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110. (U) Other videos also have been added to JEM's website in the last month. In one video from JEM's "First Conference on IDPs and Refugees" in July 2008, Khalil Ibrahim reflects on the May 10 attack, saying, "Our goals and yours are one. We have taken your

input. We did not hurt any innocent civilians [in the attack.] The government knew we were coming and wasn't able to do anything about it. We have learned many things from this attack. We entered Khartoum and fought around Mogran point, around the U.S. Embassy, and close to the presidential palace. God-willing the next trip will be the final one for us." (Note: In fact, fighting did not reach the U.S. Embassy or the presidential palace in Khartoum as the rebels did not quite make across the Nile bridges. End Note.) JEM Commander Suliman Sandal (at the same event in a video uploaded to YouTube on October 30, 2008) notes "Our troops are organized. We have decided to take control of this country and to get rid of Bashir. It is time for the young people from the IDP camps to join the movements. We will certainly enter Khartoum another time."

COMMENT:

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¶11. (SBU) JEM is far ahead of other rebel movements in terms of its relatively sophisticated use of the media, Internet, and overall public communication strategy. These videos set JEM even farther ahead, incorporating sophisticated editing and special effects, dramatic music, and footage from several different events and time periods. It is notable that the Government of Sudan has also entered this online propaganda war. In one video on YouTube a likely Government source (as some of the footage would have only been available to a government official) posted a video showing "The crimes of the Justice and Equality Movement in Omdurman with evidence of the Chadian support." The video incorporates photos of "evidence" collected from the Omdurman attack and claims that JEM destroyed private property, historical buildings, mosques and wounded innocent civilians. Although the medium of video gives added credibility to these dubious sources, these videos clearly manipulate images and distort facts.

¶12. (SBU) Comment continued: There is a wealth of information in the lengthy videos that may disprove GoS claims of a significantly weakened JEM. If in fact the videos were taken after May 10, the fleet of vehicles, hundreds of men, and JEM's audacity in showing its assets, demonstrate that JEM still remains a powerful force. (Note: JEM however could remove the detailed videos from its website given that they provide a wealth of information about JEM's operational capacity but it is more likely that they seek to portray themselves as stronger than they actually are. End Note.)

¶13. (U) Comment continued: The timing of these videos' release is noteworthy. Although it could take weeks to get footage from the field to the cities, and several more weeks for editing, this alone does not explain the lag in their release. The release date of these videos corresponds with rumored JEM activity in South Kordofan during Eid al-Adha, possible negotiations between rebel groups and the government in Qatar, and the possibility of an ICC indictment against Bashir in the coming month. The videos' motivational nature, show of military hardware, and criticism of other rebel movements are intended to project JEM's military strength and political goals within the context of all of the above.

FERNANDEZ